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THE RÔLE OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS IN THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE WOUNDED

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My task is to summarize the rôle of the Red Cross in the national program for the rehabilitation of the disabled soldier or sailor. In one sense that could be done in a dozen words, by saying that here, as in all its work, the Red Cross will subordinate itself to government leadership and bend all its enthusiasm and resources to the promotion of the official plans and to the filling of such supplemental needs as may arise. While this would perhaps adequately express the spirit of Red Cross participation, a somewhat more circumstantial account of concrete activities already undertaken or contemplated on behalf of the men who have paid the price of permanent disablement will be expected.

PROGRAM OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The wounded soldier or sailor remains under the jurisdiction of the army or navy medical authorities, and in the service, until his active treatment is ended and all possible supplemental measures of physical reconstruction have been applied. In the army, at least, the intention is to retain in the service men disabled in the line of duty, until they no longer need treatment; since April, 1918, the stated policy has therefore been to discharge no man until he is cured or as nearly cured as may be expected in view of the nature of his disability.

For those who are eventually discharged, the government, through the War Risk Insurance Law, provides not pensions based on private legislation, but just compensation to faithful workmen injured in the extra hazardous occupation of constructing a world safe for democracy. This compensation varies according to the degree of disability and the size of the dependent family. It cannot be too frequently emphasized that this compensation cannot be reduced if and because a man increases his earning power by over-

coming the handicap of a permanent injury. Accordingly, there should be no loss of incentive to seek the training which the government offers to those who cannot return to their old occupations.

Aside from this automatic government compensation, those workmen of liberty who have had sufficient native foresight, or who have been adequately persuaded, will receive for total disability the benefit of 240 monthly payments of government insurance varying in amount according to the principal they have chosen to take out. The Federal Board for Vocational Education is then authorized to offer to the free choice of any discharged soldier receiving compensation who cannot return to his old occupation, an adequate course of re-education for self-support in some other occupation suited to his condition. Similar advantages are available to those who can take up their former work, but in these cases the Vocational Board pays no family allowance during training.

When the men are trained, the same board is charged with finding them positions. In this work of placement, moreover, the board is not limited to men whom it has retrained, but has authority, under the law, to help into a new job any man who has been physically rehabilitated in the army or navy hospitals.

For those men who are entitled to compensation, and who require continued treatment after their discharge from military service, the Bureau of War Risk Insurance is authorized to provide hospital care or other necessary medical or surgical attention.

During the long period of convalescence in the hospital, the application of work is necessary for purposes of mental hygiene and functional restoration. This work should form a continuous process with the vocational training which supervenes on the man's discharge. To this end and in accordance with the Vocational Rehabilitation Law, officers of the Vocational Education Board are working in the military hospitals in coöperation with the army and navy authorities, advising the men about to be discharged and endeavoring to ensure the continuance of re-education on the voluntary civilian basis after the men leave the service.

Other federal departments stand ready to coöperate to the fullest extent of their ability. The Secretary of the Interior has an interesting plan for the assignment of reclaimable lands to returned soldiers. The Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, and the Commissioner of Education are ex-officio members of the

Federal Board for Vocational Education so that thorough integration of governmental resources and effort is possible and seems assured.

THE WORK OF THE RED CROSS HOME SERVICE

Where, then, does the Red Cross fit into this comprehensive program of official activities on behalf of the disabled soldier? Obviously it will have no direct responsibility for the treatment, training, or even placement of the returned men. But the Red Cross has, according to its federal charter, assumed an obligation of auxiliary service reaching to every soldier and sailor and to his dependents whenever they indicate a need that the Red Cross can fill. This service cannot be brusquely terminated at the point of discharge, but must continue, both for the man and his family, during that indeterminate but critical interval while the man is awaiting the application of the government's plan to his individual needs and while he is getting back on his feet in civilian life. It is especially appropriate that any service rendered to the man's family should be linked up with service to the man himself when discharged. Whatever the Red Cross does in this connection naturally falls to its Department of Civilian Relief as a phase of home service work and organization.

Red Cross home service has been described as an effort to keep safe the homes and the home standards of those who fight to make the world safe for our homes. Without intrusive insistence, but with prompt and eager readiness when called upon, home service offers the channel through which patriotism and neighborliness combine to assist and protect the wives, children, mothers and other dependents of soldiers and sailors.

There is indubitable substance in Sir Baden-Powell's oft-quoted epigram that the war will be decided about 1935 in favor of the nations which retain the quality of manhood requisite to carry on the country's work after the war. Red Cross home service is inspired by an unshaken belief that every well-considered effort to prevent deterioration in the home life and home standards of America during the war is a telling blow toward this eventual victory.

Looking with shorter focus at the immediate emergency, home service charges itself with the execution of the nation's guarantee that no enlisted man's family shall lack for anything within the

power of tactful, intelligent, neighborly and community good-will to supply. The majority of soldiers' and sailors' families need no outside help in order to maintain their normal standards of health, education, industry and family solidarity. To such it would be an impertinence to offer help. But with families already nearer the danger line, the stress of war may bring definite disaster unless the inexhaustible resources of the community spirit supply the timely remedy. Red Cross home service is the community's machinery for the execution of this intention. To such families, when and only when any need is intimated, it offers information, medical or legal service, business counsel, ordinary human companionship, in fact, every possible form of practical and friendly aid.

This effort must not be narrowly conceived as one of financial relief. It is largely in order to prevent such misapprehension that the name and concept of "home service" has been utilized. The government has rightly and generously assumed the burden of money relief through allotments and allowances, and compensation and insurance payments under the War Risk Insurance Law. It remains for the Red Cross to meet temporary emergencies by grants and loans pending arrival of government checks, and to provide relief in certain definite and necessary instances where the government finds it impossible or inexpedient to act.

Last in statement, but first in importance among the objects of home service is its effect on the soldier's morale. (There is no harder-worked word in the war shop, but no adequate substitute has yet been found.) It is still difficult to realize the size and peculiarity of the psychological problem which the war imposes on the American, as doubtless also on the Canadian and Australian armies. These men fighting in France are totally removed from the possibility of those frequent visits to their homes which are so important a part of the established routine of the French and even the British soldier. Our boys must carry on without these periodic opportunities for the relief, refreshment and inspiration for renewed effort which comes from a few days with their own folks. Therefore their home atmosphere must so far as possible be transported to them. The Director General of Civilian Relief of the American Red Cross recently studied this whole problem at first hand along the American front in France, and no one has more convincingly pictured its bearings on the war and the remedies to be applied. Of the morale of our

fighting men he heard only uniform approval throughout France. They are maintaining that morale under conditions which, because of loneliness, strangeness and remoteness do not predispose to buoyance of mind.

That our men may be protected as far as possible from worry about their families, and that nothing else which will maintain morale be left undone, it is obvious that the American people must see to it that no family of a soldier lacks for anything which will enable it to write honestly cheerful letters abroad. Any condition which would disturb the man at the front and make him anxious to return and set things right with his family must be cured without delay. The Red Cross, then, undertakes to assure every soldier or sailor before he leaves for the front that whatever may befall his folks at home the local home service section may be depended upon to act promptly, sympathetically and adequately to maintain their comfort and peace of mind. A classic of the growing home service literature is a brief letter of thanks from a boy whose mother and sister had been visited and helped in some simple way. "I want to thank you all for what you have done; I can soldier better now."

Home service attacks these responsibilities through a highly developed special organization within the Red Cross. On the solid foundation of community self-expression through local committees of each Red Cross chapter, it is guided and standardized by trained executives working in these home service sections, as they are called, in fourteen division offices covering the entire country, and finally at headquarters in Washington. From the beginning there has been undeviating emphasis on the highest standards and on the need of special training for the responsible and complex duties of dealing with family relationships. The supply of trained workers was wholly unequal to the new demand, so that the Red Cross has been obliged to set up a complete educational system to meet the emergency. In twenty-five or more cities at strategic points throughout the country, home service institutes give repeated courses of six weeks duration in the principles and practice of this freshly inspired form of social work. Shorter courses are given by many chapters and additional lectures at universities, and before general audiences systematically describe the purpose and program of home service.

At present 50,000 men and women are enrolled and serving on

10,000 of these local committees. More than 300,000 families have been given some form of assistance. Even with financial relief in the background of its program, the current expenditure averages \$400,000 a month. It amounted to \$1,500,000 for the first six months of the present year and will probably exceed \$4,000,000 during the second half of 1918.

HOME SERVICE IN RELATION TO THE DISABLED MEN

Thus the Red Cross has already in operation a special piece of war service machinery, created over night, and peculiarly adapted to assist in the after-care of the disabled soldier. Congress has framed into the national law its reasoning that the task of making civilians out of soldiers is work for a civil department of the government. In this process of "demilitarization" of those who have finished their work at the front, it is surely appropriate that if the coöperation of voluntary agencies be required, a large rôle should be played by this great group of workers for the welfare of soldiers' and sailors' families. Obviously it is difficult and wasteful to separate what is done in helping a returned soldier through the critical stage of transition to civil life from what is done for his family. In theory, both functions may be effectively discharged by the same organization; in practice, the Red Cross has long been ready to meet the similar but differing requirements whenever and wherever the government, which properly takes the chief responsibility, may accept its aid.

Where, then, is such aid most likely to be asked for and how can it be given? First in continuing for the returned soldier's family, the same oversight and service which, if needed, has already been given to that family while the man was at the front. So far as medical or legal advice, information, companionship, opportunity for recreation, practical helpfulness of any kind was needed then, it will be needed now, both because the nation cannot see the family lose ground or suffer and because now more than ever, the man must know that all is well at home if his spirit is to "carry on" through these further weeks of separation during his hospital treatment and perhaps during his vocational training.

Throughout this period the influence of the family must be counted as a powerful factor in having the ex-soldier take the decisions which should lead to a safe and productive future for him-

self and, inseparably, for his family. The man must be advised against demanding premature discharge from the care of the medical officers, now so freely offered under the generous policy of the War Department. Vocational training under the law of June 27, 1918, is optional with the man. Often he must be wisely and sympathetically induced to see its advantages to himself and to his family. In bringing him to a keen realization of his own best interests in all these respects the knowledge and opinion of his family must be accounted a factor of the first importance. Those in a position to form and guide the family's opinion can render an incomparable service in thus assuring its future.

In several groups of cases, such as the blind, the tuberculous, and the mentally diseased, home service workers will often be able, on request of the proper authorities, to give confidential and timely advice, aiding the medical officers both in reaching accurate diagnoses, and in determining whether and when it is safe and wise to discharge the patient for convalescence at home.

Similar assistance can be rendered the vocational officers in studying the factors of personal, family and community background which must be taken into consideration in any sound decision as to the best occupation for a given man to undertake. Once training is commenced the support of the family must be strong and steady, and its influence must offset any temptation to take immediate work at inflated wages, to the neglect or abandonment of preparation for a safe and increasingly productive future.

But the interest and helpfulness of home service also extends directly to the man himself, though here, more than ever, the prime responsibility of the Federal Board for Vocational Education is recognized as the agency called upon to deal officially with the needs of discharged men. Already, however, the Red Cross offices have been able to furnish the Federal Board with lists of men who have been discharged and who may be eligible for training or for more productive re-employment. These men have come to the attention of local home service committees, and have been given preliminary information, relief or counsel as to their rights and duties under the War Risk Insurance Law and the Vocational Rehabilitation Law. Such informational work is the first duty of home service in its contact with the disabled man.

In the normal instance such men are presumably willing and

anxious to take advantage of the plans of the government and need, first of all, to be told of their rights and how to make application. Cases have already come to the attention of Red Cross workers, however, where men have refused to apply for compensation or any other benefits under the federal laws, being convinced that there is involved some mysterious plan on the part of the government to get the men back into the army. It goes without saying that such misapprehension could arise only among the ill-informed. It is obviously an opportunity and duty of the community Red Cross workers to take the lead in correcting any such state of misinformation and ignorance as to the beneficent purposes of the law.

So far as possible it is understood to be the plan and intention of the Vocational Board to place men for training in schools or industries near their homes. Nevertheless in some instances circumstances may call for the training of men in particular industries which offer the necessary facilities at best advantage only in a few places. This may mean that some men must continue their training for a certain number of weeks or months at a distance from their homes. In this event the Federal Board will naturally make every effort through its local agents to see that the constant friendly advisory services of an experienced older man standing either in an official or unofficial relation toward the discharged soldier shall be available for his guidance and protection. Red Cross home service sections in such cities will stand ready to render such assistance in this respect as the Vocational Board may desire. Since representative citizens, bankers, lawyers, doctors, business men and clergymen, are in practically every instance represented on home service sections, the organization is already equipped to offer intelligent service of this friendly and brotherly character.

In most instances it would probably be unfortunate if families felt obliged to migrate to any considerable distance in order to remain near the men during the relatively brief period of training in these instances where they cannot be trained near home. The home service sections have constant occasion to deal with problems of family migration and would be prepared in such instances to study each such problem on its own merits and assist in the wisest solution.

Thus again we are led back to the conclusion that no practical separation can be made between official or private efforts to assist

the man and similar efforts to aid his family. All of this points to the desirability of the closest working relations between the Vocational Board and the home service organization of the Red Cross. It is gratifying to be able to report that such relations have already been established and disabled soldiers and sailors are already being cared for under a clear understanding of the respective spheres of authority and interest of the several agencies concerned.

There is danger, in so much reference to service, of giving the impression that there is something smacking of "charity," something essentially out of accord with the American spirit of self-reliance and individual ambition in the plans which have been discussed. Nothing could be further from the truth and from the spirit of Red Cross home service. Just as the greater number of families of soldiers and sailors have needed no outside assistance, so it may be expected that among the discharged men only a minority will either themselves or because of their families require such aid as the Red Cross can offer. The experience of the past year and the records from all over the country bear witness, however, to the fact that there are a definite number of discharged men and families who have welcomed the information and assistance which the Red Cross has been in a position to give and who have accurately estimated the spirit of patriotism and homage to those who serve, with which such aid is offered. And nothing is more fundamental in the social philosophy of home service than the conviction of its duty and of its success in making those it aids self-reliant and self-sufficient in the highest possible degree.

Within the Red Cross a distinction is made for administrative purposes between the functions of the Department of Military Relief and the Department of Civilian Relief. The former controls all work done directly for the men while in service; the latter has charge of the work for families and for the men after their discharge. But it would be a mistake to imagine that such technicalities of internal organization involve any distinction in the spirit and effectiveness of Red Cross work. The functions of the two departments dovetail at many points and their respective agents work together toward the single object of serving the needs of the men.

At each military post and hospital the Red Cross Bureau of Camp Service has a field director with a staff of assistants charged with constant direct contact with the men and ready to help them in

every way. Thus provision is made for keeping families informed about the health of the men, and for establishing connection with the appropriate home service section, whenever the associate field director finds a soldier or sailor distressed because of some need in his family.

Under the Department of Military Relief has also been conducted the pioneer research and educational work of the Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men in New York, and the more recently established Red Cross Institute for the Blind, which is intended to supplement the work of the army hospital at Baltimore, where all our blinded soldiers are receiving the most expert care and teaching. Here indeed is a final instance of the close correlation of Red Cross activities. The home service organization is assisting the military medical authorities in obtaining essential data as to the previous history of the blind men, in explaining the government's plan to the family, and in selecting the relative who will be taken to Baltimore by the Red Cross Institute and trained side by side with the blinded soldier.

A final responsibility of the Red Cross is to coöperate with every community movement to make known generally the purpose and program of the government. Home service workers are constantly explaining these matters to individuals, and must likewise lead or aid in presenting them to the public generally. When once all citizens of all ranks understand the splendidly conceived government plan, they will stand back of it in every detail and make it an assured success. Then and only then will pass away every danger of hysterical, ephemeral hero-worship which may otherwise prove a stumbling block. Then and only then will a sound and wholesome public opinion dominate and save the disabled man to a happy and productive life, in which he shall still play a glorious part in the peaceful achievements of his community, his state and his country.